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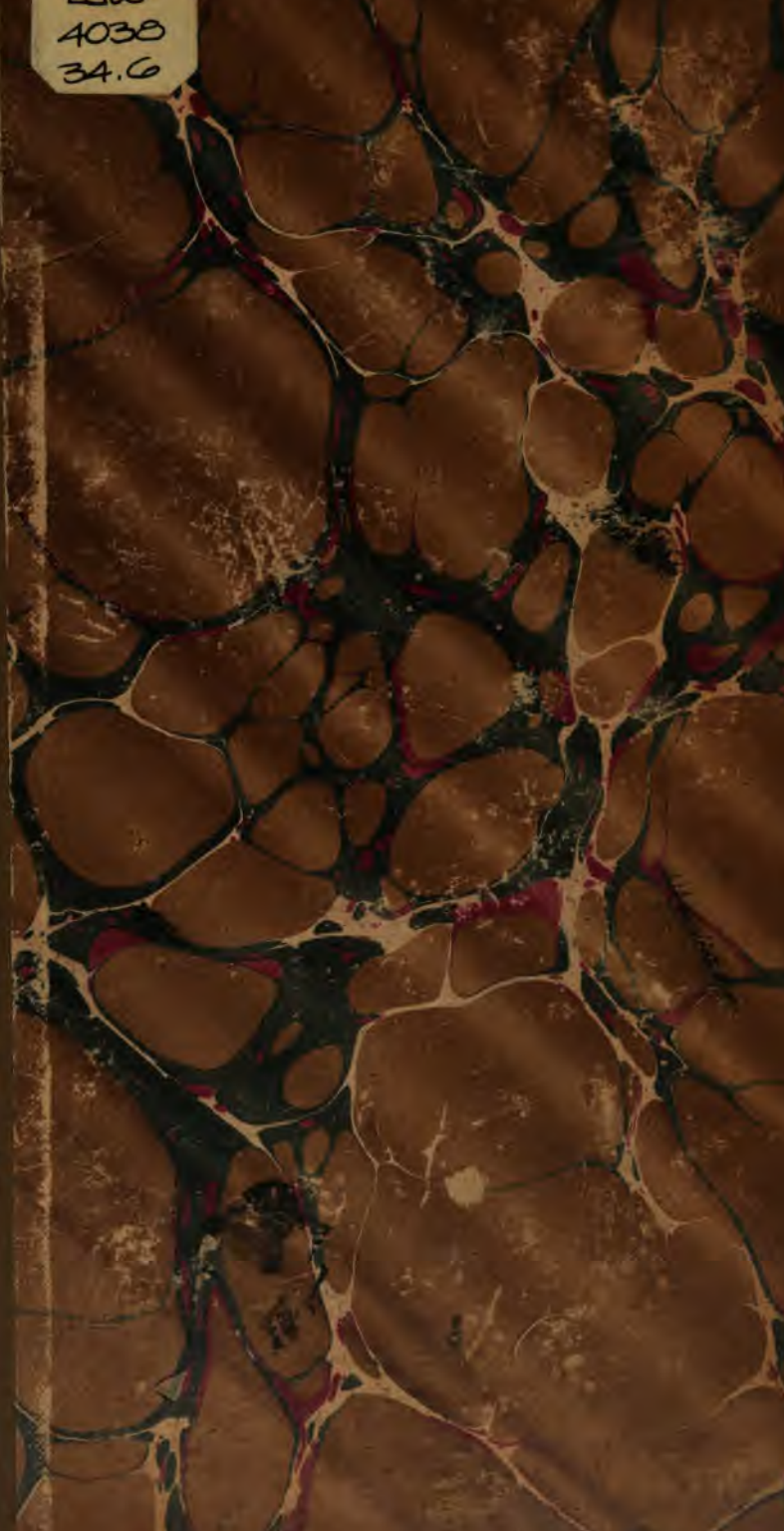
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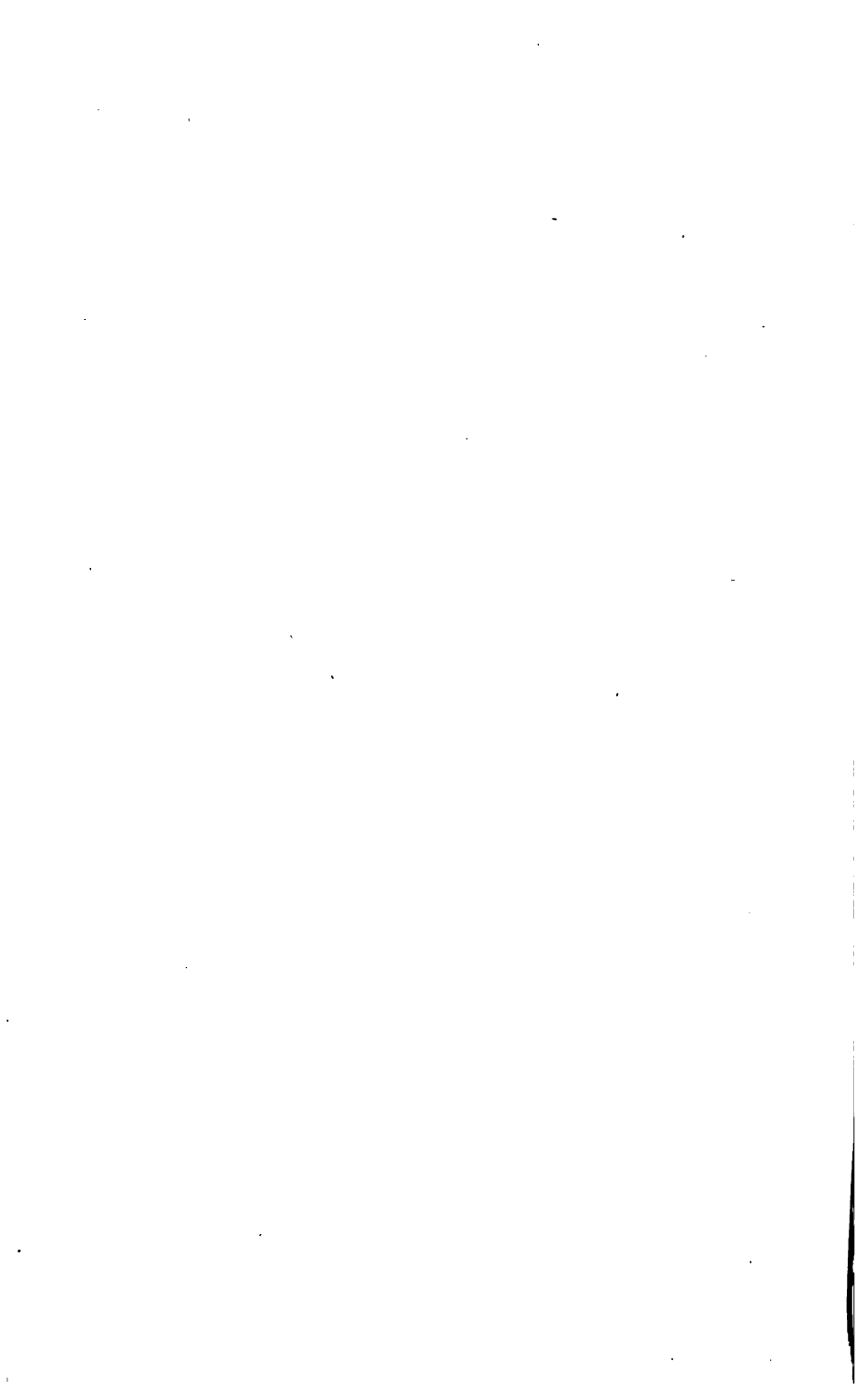
Sewell .
The Attack upon the University
of Oxford - 1834.

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**THE ATTACK UPON
THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,
IN A LETTER TO EARL GREY.**

BY THE REV. W. SEWELL, M.A.

FELLOW AND TUTOR OF EXETER COLLEGE, OXFORD.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON :

**JAMES BOHN, 12, KING WILLIAM STREET, STRAND,
AND D. A. TALBOYS, OXFORD.**

MDCCCXXXIV.

Edw 4038.34.6



Charles William Eliot fund ^B

It must seem a great presumption for an individual to give publicity again to opinions on a question which so deeply interests such a body as the University of Oxford. But a former pamphlet, connected with the subject, being now out of print, I have thought it better to throw nearly the same observations into a shorter and more general form, than to publish a second edition.

WILLIAM SEWELL.

LONDON :

C. RICHARDS, PRINTER, ST. MARTIN'S-LANE, CHARING CROSS.

LETTER.

MY LORD,

THE result of a debate in the House of Commons, has just been made known, by which that branch of the legislature has authorized the introduction of a Bill for throwing open the Universities of England to all classes and descriptions of Dissenters. This Bill is in a most marked and especial manner sanctioned by his Majesty's Ministers. But it is not a plan of their own.

There is no time to enlarge upon the question. Every hour in which the House of Commons is sitting is now an hour of peril. The whole country must feel it. No sensible man can now take up the journals of the day, without trembling at the constant probability of meeting, in some corner of the paper, in some midnight debate, or hastily drawn statute, the most deadly and destructive principles, coiled up in some frivolous measures, unobserved, and unexposed before the public. No man can tell any longer for how many days he may reckon on a single possession which he enjoys, whether of principle, of property, or right. Our legislation

is too rapid. We cannot keep pace with it, even in our thoughts. The House of Commons, in the hands of the government, or rather the government in the hands of the House of Commons, is a lever which is now hourly in motion to tear up some foundation, or unsettle some mode of conduct, or pull down some established institution. The very ground beneath our feet is not safe. God knows where it is all to end.

My Lord, in a single session, without the slightest examination, without any evidence before you of the working of the plan—one University with its whole body crying out against it—the other nearly unanimous—unanimous in all those minds most competent to decide on questions of morals, and religion, and discipline, though not perhaps on mathematics and geology, which are not the subjects in dispute—not only this, but at the bidding of men who come avowedly before the legislature as enemies of the Established Church—who declare that all their measures at this moment are intended to undermine and subvert it—whom none but the Government persist in pronouncing very moderate petitioners, and who spontaneously and indignantly reject this moderate interpretation of their views—you are about, not perhaps deliberately, but with your eyes open, and your intentions, it is asserted, friendly to the Church established in this country, to strike the most

deadly blow at its religion, next to the starvation of its ministry, which in all strictness of logical conclusion must very soon follow, that man ever dared to attempt who believed in a God and his Bible.

May I place before your Lordship very shortly, (God grant that the public likewise may be roused to attention) the facts of the case. It is their interest, not the interest of any individual, or any class connected with the Universities by the wages of money or place—not the interest of these bodies in the mass, whose dignity and character may perish without touching one selfish member—nor is it the interest exclusively of the Church—the laymen, even more than the clergy, who constitute the greatest religious corporation in this country—it is the interest of the whole nation—of all who love religion—pure, vital, tolerant religion—who would save their unborn generations from the spread of the most noxious poisons—who do not wish this country to become a philosophical, scientific, mathematical, revolutionary, infidel France—it is their interest which is at stake in this question—remote as it may seem, and little as they have thought on it—whether any Dissenters or none are to be admitted henceforth within our walls.

My Lord, these Universities are at present—they have been for years and years—they

never will consent to be otherwise—great incorporations and societies—not merely for the encouragement of literature—no man who founded our endowments dreamed of such a thing—not a statute in one of our colleges would fail to cry out against the thought—they are incorporations for the purpose of education. They are practically—no possible spoliation of property could make it otherwise—no economy or parsimony could prevent it—confined to the great mass of Englishmen who, from their wealth and connection, form the highest ruling ranks in society. English gentlemen nearly all of them belong to the Established Church of England. The proportion is enormous. There are gentlemen—honourable, cultivated, high-minded gentlemen—among the Dissenters. But the great bulk of Dissenters, from the very causes which generated Dissent, is formed of the poorer classes, of those who cannot by possibility have an interest in University arrangements. Will your Lordship observe the two parties against whom you are legislating. Practical necessity, which with any wise legislator is as strong as legal right, constitutes the aristocracy of this country—the word is used in its widest sense, as comprehending the peerage, the gentry, the clergy, the liberal professions, the great establishments of commerce—it constitutes the whole of this body, (is it a body to

be trifled with?) one, and the very principal party affected by this new scheme. It is a scheme for introducing a change in their place and plan of education. They have an interest, an infinitely deeper interest in any such change than the great bodies of the Universities themselves. We are affected in our corporate capacities, in which we neither feel disgrace nor sustain personal harm. They are reached through their children. And the blow will come home to them. If they do not feel their position, and rouse themselves to ward it off, it will be surprising and alarming. Many men will despair of their country.

The other body, My Lord, with which you are about to interfere, are the Universities themselves. They have a vast stake in this country. They have a very high character. The very ground on which their rights are invaded is that their learning and discipline, and high principles, and religion, have exposed them to the envy of those who are now excluded from their benefits. They spread their roots through the whole nation. Many years have now passed since young men have been accustomed to quit us and turn afterwards in flippancy and pertness to ridicule the instructors of their youth. All the soundest part of the community is deeply and sincerely attached to our welfare, and to the system by which it is secured. Your Lordship, it is said, cannot understand this feeling—if it

is true that you never had the blessing of an university education. Perhaps the same may be said of nearly all those whose sentiments agree with your own. It is a great comfort to think and know this.

The Universities stand to the whole body of English gentry within the communion of the Church of England, as any gentleman stands to a parent whose sons are entrusted to his care. It is to be hoped they will recognize the relation. It is very real and very deeply impressed on our conscience. The system which has hitherto been pursued has been sanctioned by those for whom it is exercised. They have been satisfied in general with its working. It is certainly not perfect. Nothing human can be perfect. To some details parties may object. But even these, perhaps, they would rather leave to our practical judgment, and our real sincere wish for improvement, than trust them for reformation to the legislature, or indeed shake every law of property by permitting arbitrary interference from government.

But if there be one part of this system against which no reclamation has been made, towards which there exists in the thoughtless nothing but a painful indifference, and in sound hearted sensible parents, nothing but sincere satisfaction—it is that part which a body in the legislature is now thoughtlessly and hastily de-

stroying. I mean the union of religion with learning—and that religion the religion of their families—the religion of their Bible and their Church. No point is so anxiously examined by those who are worthy respect, no improvement so gladly hailed, no danger contemplated with such fear, as any connected with this vital education. For religion, my Lord, and not only religion, but Christianity, and a sound and a reasonable Christianity, is, after all, vital. Neither the ministers of the crown, nor the House of Commons, dare to tell the English people that it is not. They speak as if they knew what it meant. They act—indeed they act—as if a measure in which its safety is wrapt up were a road bill or a poor rate.

They threaten us, they threaten the gentry of this country, with removing at a moment, without warning (the Ministers not one month ago acknowledged they knew nothing of the subject)—they threw out the question for discussion, that attention might be excited by degrees—they threaten us both with removing, (as far as the legislature can do,) a great barrier of our religion—the most strong and important barrier of any in all our institutions.

The gentry of the country are silent. They have not yet spoken out. God grant that they may speak. God grant they may appear before the king, and before the hereditary legislature of

the country, and demand at least a respite till the nature of such proceedings be made known. They have been warned that all they most value and love depends on their unanimous exertion. They trust, perhaps, to us; but they must not trust to us too much, for we do indeed require their assistance.

Now what is the conduct of the Universities? They have been taken by surprise. Little as yet has been done publicly. A great deal must be done. They owe it to their country—to their religion—to the piety of their founders—to the memory of their dead—to the greatness of their own character and of the national danger—to all that can demand and consecrate a struggle for life and death—to man and to God they owe that struggle—and no one can doubt they will make it—make it hand in hand.

But what is their feeling? It is perfectly well known. The legislature is thoroughly aware of it. They know that one University would as soon see its property plundered, and its privileges annihilated, as see any barrier demolished which would endanger the strict lines of their religion. Not a voice has been raised for such destruction. The other —, but we must wait to hear it speak. No one can mistake what has appeared from its advocates of change, for the deliberate, the general, the rational sentiments of such a Christian body as the University of

Cambridge. No Christian legislators ought to listen on a question of religious education to one who, in his capacity of an instructor of youth, within an especially Christian institution, could declare, without shame, if it be false, or without remorse, if it be true, that for the last thirty years not a lecture, to his knowledge, had there been given on Theology, which any Dissenter, of any denomination, Unitarian or Catholic, could have scrupled for one moment to attend.*

A very few hours, perhaps, will show what are the real sentiments of the assembled body at Cambridge. There can be no doubt of the result. There can not be the shadow of a chance of their differing from this University. It does not require observation. They will both join by an open remonstrance, the full tenor of which is already in possession of the Ministers, and which might be inferred from one simple fact—their opposition to the College of London because it cannot include religion; praying, as men, as Christians, as members of the Church of England, as representatives and trustees of benefactors devoted to the honour of their Maker, as the guardians and instructors of the first body of young men in this country, that no change whatever be attempted. They deserve to be listened to. We are not contemptible—we

* See Professor Sedgwick's letter to the Editor of the *Times*.

cannot be contemptible in the eyes of a British legislature. We do not come before them stained with any charge of speculation or tyranny, or injustice. We have clean hands, and clean hearts. We are not ignorant, prejudiced men, cooped up in cloisters, and ignorant of the world beyond our walls. We live in that world as much as any man ought to live, who would acquire a sound practical knowledge of mankind, and of his duty to his country. We do not speak on a subject foreign to our habits before a tribunal well versed in its experience. Quite the reverse. It is one which is constantly before us—which we study daily—study most anxiously—study, my Lord, at this crisis, (many will assert it) with an anguish of fear and sorrow, which those will scarcely comprehend who do not see the whole end of these measures. Above all, we can come before the country, and demand an examination of our motives. They are not selfish. They cannot be interested. We wish to confine our numbers—to prevent an accession to our revenues—to exclude wealthy, and not powerless families—men with whom many of us might like to associate as companions in literature—not a few whom we might probably win over within the pale of our own establishment. We do it, we might solemnly assure your Lordship, and the public, and especially the body whom we exclude, most reluc-

tantly, most painfully. Many have thought much on the subject, and studied the feelings of the place. It is with the deepest anxiety that they have watched the first natural feelings of a kind and well-disposed heart, anxious to conciliate and to benefit, and regarding so many branches of Dissenters as separated in error more than crime, and joined with us in the faith of our Saviour—that they have watched such a mind, while they participated in all its sentiments, balance, and give way, and only recall itself at last to the necessity of strictness in exclusion, from seeing all the consequences of laxness brought palpably and conclusively before it. This is indeed our prevalent tone of mind on this great subject. We are liberal, most liberal in our wishes. But we must be firm, very firm in our duties. And knowing how natural it is to wish for an extension of benefits, and the removal of separation between those who have so many things in common, we can account for the conduct of your Lordship, as we wish you to give us credit for our own. Our observation—a very careful, and mature, and experienced observation—forbids us to indulge our benevolence. That benevolence we attribute to your Lordship. But the same observation, if time is permitted, will, it may be hoped, lead you also to limit it. We shall, perhaps, exercise not the less firmness, because we lament its necessity; but there is not

any temper of mind which can so raise human nature in our eyes, and support it in a conflict, and remove the suspicion of false bias, and most of all, disarm the anger of antagonists, as a manly declaration of uncompromising resistance in the necessity of duty, and in the spirit of personal charity.

In this spirit we would stand before the legislature. We wish also to lay it bare before Dissenters. Many, nearly all of their bodies, and in proportion to the purity of their faith, are also exclusive—some of them highly exclusive—almost intolerant. Nowhere is toleration so wide as in the Church of England. It is universally granted. As having communions of their own they can acknowledge the necessity of exclusion. As Christians, they can understand our appeal, when we tell them of our interest in guarding against all that may impair our Christianity. They can understand—your Lordship can understand—and the country can appreciate the following motives of our conduct. I will state them shortly, for they have been stated at length elsewhere, and require no comment.

We are a constituted society for education—we prove it by our statutes—prove it by the practice of years—prove it by the necessity of the case, and by the expediency of things. If we are reduced into a society for literature, we

can exercise an indisputable right. We can dismiss our students, and study by ourselves. It will perhaps be the best thing for us to do.

The University is indeed a distinct corporation from the several colleges.—It was originally intended, not merely for general instruction, but mainly and chiefly for Theology. It was found that to bring students together solely for this purpose—to give them nothing but lectures, was full of mischief. They lived free from any control. They were actually licensed to beg about the country. They were turbulent, headstrong, and sanguinary. Many murders at that period used to be committed in our streets. The memory of some is still continued. All dissoluteness of morals surrounded them. It may be seen in some work of that time—and more researches perhaps will be made—that often in the same house was the lecture-room of a professor, and the focus of a brothel. It is not surprising.

We also know the nature of the German Universities, and we have no wish to be like them. That we might not be like them, that all our students might be placed under proper domestic control, pious and good men founded our colleges. They constitute now the whole of the University. We have no floating body of students. Our statutes forbid it, and our good sense will exclude it. There is, therefore, no

room for Dissenters, except within our colleges. In these colleges we wish to educate the young as in a family.

We know of no practicable scheme of education, worthy of any being raised above a moving puppet or a dumb brute, which is not vitally and essentially religious.

We are Christians, it may be hoped sincere and hearty Christians. We acknowledge no religion for those to whom the Bible has been given, but pure and perfect Christianity.

But we have searched in our Bibles, by the best light our reason can afford us, for that pure and perfect Christianity in the form most according with God's will, and we find it in the Church of England. We intend to adhere to it.

As we adhere to it ourselves, so we intend to teach it to others—teach it especially to those who are sent here for that very purpose, to be bred up in all soundness of knowledge and goodness of heart. We wish to make it, not only a branch, but the root and the main spirit of our instruction. We think religion the great end of our creation, and we do not know how to banish it into darkness, amidst worn out theories and cobwebbed sciences, to be drawn out only rarely and by compulsion, as something of which we were ashamed. We wish to place it constantly before us, that it may grace all the elegance of our literature, hallow all our studies,

enlighten all our knowledge. We do not think this is the day to relegate it into corners and dark holes. Even if it had been so before, we could not suffer it to continue so longer.

And now we are arrived at the line on which we must contest our ground. It is our duty and our wish—our most solemn duty, our most earnest wish, to rear up the young men under our care in the pure faith and practice of the Church of England. If the Legislature or the Government dispute this duty, if they object to this wish, they proclaim in language which it will be no longer possible to mistake, that they are not Members of that Church. I will not say that the dissolution will be effected of an union between the Church and the State, for such language should never have been used. The State will have apostatized from the Church, in which it was originally included. This is the proper expression. Let this apostasy be avowed—and the Christians of the Church of England—Laity and Clergy—must then decide upon their conduct. It cannot be that your Lordship can contemplate the sequel of such an apostasy without some alarm. It is perhaps as awful a prospect for any one directly or indirectly involved in its responsibility, as any human being, with a future state of retribution before him, and the language of Scripture sounding in his ear, can well lay to his heart.

But the Government has not yet in words

avowed any such ultimate intention. They allow, nay profess that they wish us to fulfil the great and sacred object of our institutions. But they call on us at the same time to do, what we assure them in all seriousness and earnestness must at once annihilate it all. They wish us to throw open our gates to every description of Dissenter.

My Lord; before it is stated, for the information of the public, who have thought very little on the subject, what are the reasons of our grounded opinions, may not that public in some measure be able to judge between us, by looking on the condition of the parties ?

Both the Government and the Universities agree in one main and essential object, the connection of religion with education. If this be denied, and they would reduce us to a London University, let them boldly state it to the country, to the parents and families of our students. And the country will understand the meaning. But this ground has not yet been taken. We agree in the view of our duties. But a condition is demanded in those duties, a condition which your Lordship declares can be inserted without any interruption to them; and this which we most conscientiously deny.

Now, placed side by side, to be judged by a reasonable people, which opinion must bear the most weight ?

For the safety of this plan there is first and

foremost the voice of the Dissenters, who proclaim that they urge it as a means of finally overturning an establishment which we stand forward to defend, and which Ministers allow should be defended. The confession of an enemy is something. It has very seldom been used before in such an argument as this. I intend to murder you, and therefore you need not fear to throw away your arms.

There is, secondly, the opinion of the Ministry. Some of them (it is said your Lordship in the number) can know little of the workings of our system. They were never members of our societies. Others have left us at a time when that system was worked very imperfectly. No Minister of State can be expected to be very deeply versed in the theory or practice of moral discipline—least of all in religious education. They can have no field for observation—and very great observation is required.

There is, thirdly, a large body in the House of Commons. Their names and their general views will sufficiently explain the impropriety of taking them as guides in legislation for any purpose connected with the Church.

There is, fourthly, (I approach the subject with pain, but I shall not hesitate to speak out) a party in the University of Cambridge, who have come forward to pray against exclusion. A difference of opinion among ourselves was

naturally hailed in triumph. It necessarily weakens our force, unless those who secede from the majority can be connected with any of that danger, against which we are striving to guard. The men in that party are a few of them very eminent—eminent in science. One of them has been triumphantly put forward as a strong and gifted defender of our Church and our religion. Will your Lordship have the goodness to enquire of those who are competent to judge, what is the experience, and conduct, and interest of those distinguished men—not in geology, not in mathematics—but in that which is the subject of their testimony, moral and religious education, conducted by domestic regulations. They do not, in the minds of many, hold any position which entitles them to the highest authority in such matters. We know the danger and the influence of science upon the human mind. Nothing that we see in the present day at all diminishes our suspicion of it. It renders men peculiarly unapt to judge upon questions of moral conduct. By moral conduct is not meant virtue or vice, but the workings of the human heart. The whole world of hypothetical axioms, of mathematical relations, of material laws, we leave undisputed to them. On the human mind in the action of religion we claim a right of judgment to ourselves.

I know many men acquainted with the gentle-

men to whom unhappily it is necessary to allude. I never heard one who did not admire their science, nor one who abstained from protestations against their judgment in such moral matters. It was so before the present occasion of calling them into notice. The defence of religion which has been appealed to as a proof of the soundness of view entertained by the leader of their party, has been read and admired; but admired by many with a painful impression that something was wanting. No man can doubt that its author is a Christian, and an ornament of Christianity. But his view of Christianity seems—not indeed unsound, but imperfect. It leaves out the whole feature and relations of the Church upon earth—the very point on which our conduct now turns. Other views in it, likewise, are illogical and dangerous. And his theory of natural religion is most defective. We have no wish to be encumbered with the help of a natural theology, unconnected with the great facts of Christianity. We do not require to be taught, as science has been lately teaching us, that there is a God, and that we are his creatures. We have much better evidence for this, and for all the solemn truths of our Bible, than can be gathered by all the art of men from the orbits of the stars or the bowels of the earth. It is not certain that it may not be necessary for the true and sincere Christians of

this age to protest solemnly and anxiously against the support of that natural theology, which comprises, if rightly studied, all the great peculiarities of the Bible, but which, as science has traced it hitherto, instead of assisting Christianity, is more than irrelevant to its truth, and purblind in its whole view of facts. If a measure is now to be passed on the authority of this party of gentlemen, that authority ought to be weighed. It should be weighed with the declaration of their leader thrown into the scale—a declaration made without one symptom of remorse, without apparently a notion of its nature.* Thirty years, in a place of education ! No necessary instruction

* In justification of our views, I may however affirm, that Dissenters have repeatedly passed their terms as undergraduates without creating any difficulties in the mode of administering discipline in the several Colleges. With this discipline the petitioners expressly declined any intention of interfering. I wish also to remind the members of the senate that no undergraduate is compelled to attend a lecture delivered by any of the professors of theology, and that, to the best of my belief, no College lectures on divinity have ever, within the last thirty years, been delivered, which a Dissenter of any denomination would have scrupled to attend ; such lectures being studiously confined to a critical examination of various parts of the New Testament, to discussions on the evidences of Christianity, and so on. In confirmation of this I may point out that “ Paley’s Evidences,” “ Butler’s Analogy,” and “ Doddridge’s Evidences,” have been for many years the subjects of College divinity lectures, in addition to the Greek text of the New Testament. The subjects of controversial theology have been carefully avoided, as entirely unfitted for the ordinary course of academic competition. The best proof of what I am now stating, and one least open to cavil, will be found in the printed papers of different College examinations, which have been in general circulation for more than thirty years.—*Professor Sedgwick’s First Letter.*

in religion! No lecture in divinity of a kind which any man, Catholic or Jew, could scruple for a moment to attend!!! And we are then told that no evil has accrued from the admission of Dissenters to Cambridge!!!

And this is the last point of the support. We are referred to Cambridge, where the system of admission has been found to work without harm!! We are referred to Universities on the continent totally unlike to our own in any one point of origin, object, or character. It is hoped some one acquainted with the nature of a German University, will soon enable the public to judge if they would wish the young men of England to be converted into German students. But, indeed, it will be wise to pause before the legislature shall blindly be misled by such a monstrous perversion of analogy.

Such, my Lord, is the body of that impulse by which the legislature is now urged to throw open our gates to Dissenters.

Against this they will have the protestations, the most anxious and solemn protestations, of all those who are most actively engaged in the work and the welfare of these places. There are men who have never thought about it. There are others who do not intend to think. There may be some lukewarmness, but very little. Men in bodies are not easily excited where their own interests are not obviously

engaged. We are contending for the interests of others, and therefore we may perhaps fail in obtaining some portion of assistance. But when the legislature legislates for commerce, they consult commercial men. When it argues for the repeal of a tax, they comply with the representations of the tax payers. If a manufacture be the subject of the law, the manufacturer's evidence is listened to—listened to with respect—listened to with compliance, if it be shown to be disinterested, and nothing but speculation and interest are opposed to his practical knowledge. This principle, which a child can understand, (I and the country will not like to see it abandoned by its government) we demand, we entreat, to have applied to our own simple question of expediency.

We assert, most solemnly and thoughtfully, with every wish to concede, with not an object of selfishness perceptible—let me say, as many others may say, with that humble devotion of mind which prays that our ignorance may be enlightened—that we may not be blinded by prejudice, or misled by fear, in a decision which involves beyond a doubt the future religious character of this country.—We assert that we cannot carry on, as our opponents assert that we can, a sound and religious education, such as we wish by degrees to see perfected, in both our Universities, if Dissenters are mixed up with our students.

We wish to teach them regularly, what your Lordship has publicly allowed to be the best and purest form of religion—and what the whole country for years has demanded that we should teach—to teach it them by books, by lectures, by private conversation, by friendly intercourse, by the force of example, by communion in prayer, by the Sacraments of the Church—to mix it up with the whole course of our studies, as an essential, inseparable part—or rather as its soul and spirit. To do this we must be teachers, not disputants. We must not have our authority infringed, and our positions contested, by the presence of juvenile cavil and dissension. We must also be perfectly free. We must not be checked in any course of argument by the fear of wounding feelings, or provoking opposition. I remember once, in a lecture of my own, being stopt all at once, in describing the enormities of the Jews, by observing the pain which I was causing to a young man, himself converted, but whose friends had belonged to that persuasion. It gave me a lesson, which others may apply to all other species of Dissent.

But we must also be in a state of peace. If men cannot agree, it is better to keep them apart. We cannot coincide with Dissenters. They cannot coincide with us. It is not possible. Even if the Universities were purified by extirpating their present members, and Dissenters

were replaced in their room, there could be no agreement and no peace. It seems indeed to be forgotten by the legislature, that the Church is one, but Dissent a legion. They could no more hold together among themselves than they could with us. They would purify their own body. One sect would occupy our place, and shut out all the rest, because within the same walls they could not exist as friends. But peacefulness, quietness, sobriety, are very necessary elements in a system of religious education. Our friendship, the total absence of all bitterness in our feelings, even our anxiety to concede, if concession were compatible with duty, arises from the simple fact that we have no communication with Dissenters, which can provoke or demand animosity. Why is this peace to be disturbed, and our feelings embittered? Why are we to be made miserable as men, and incapable of our duty as Christian Instructors, by surrounding us constantly with the jarrings of disputation and polemical factions? If exclusion be a grievance to Dissenters, to that infinitely small portion affected by it, will not admission be a grievance, a thousand-fold greater grievance to us, who, indeed, have a right more just, to the indulgence of our national legislature, than seceders from the faith of their country.

But indeed our situation is nothing compared with the situation of our students. No one can

describe to you the anxiety with which *their* prospects and trials are regarded by many who know them best and see them most. They are a very excellent body of young men. I hope in this crisis they will feel that the eye of the country is upon them, and the future salvation of the country mostly in their hands. They are responding, wherever pains are taken, to all our efforts at religious instruction. They are exposed already too much to the risk of licentious thought, and light conversation. My Lord, do you wish to throw in among them—they are young, they are unformed, open to difficulties, unsuspicious of error, they are the great mass of the gentry in this country—from them are to be taken our clergy, our magistrates, the possessors of our lands, the great leaders of opinion and conduct in the focus of the religion of the world—do you, can you, desire to throw one more, one deadly danger, into the perils through which they are to pass? You are legislating for them. Will you mix up with them in their unguarded hours; in their private associations, scepticism, and doubt, and cavil, and dissension on all the great elements of religion. Will you authorize one friend to lay before them a Socinian translation of the Scriptures, another to enlarge upon the folly of an atonement and a Saviour, another to question episcopacy, another to urge arguments for Judaism, another to go still farther,

and reject the whole Bible as imposture? Will you subject them to such shocks as these, when their heart is open, and no one is by to warn them, when they are sinful and ignorant, and weak, and suspicious of all authority,—shocks which not the faith of a martyr, nor the purity of an angel, could resist, if often and insidiously repeated.

Numbers are not wanted to do it. One or two—and all may be done. I have before me now the recollection, a very terrible recollection, of the evil which unknown and in the privacy of society, one thoughtless young man, whom I knew, spread round him by the language of scepticism. He indulged it unheard by those who would instantly have followed a discovery with a removal from this place. But no such removal could be justified, if the scepticism were known and passed over in a formal admission to our societies. I am not speaking of open infidelity, but of doubt, and sarcasm, and denial on any portion whatever of religion. He who begins to doubt a part, and finds all parts attacked in turn, will very soon cast away all. We the moral teachers of the place, should indeed be listened to, but as a form and a necessity. But others would be heard in opposition, and with much more vivacity and interest in private rooms, and convivial meetings,—others whom we could not punish, whom we should not be

allowed to silence, whom we should rather be compelled to applaud for that wish to promulgate belief, which wish we solemnly profess to be a part of our own Christianity.

But this is not all.

My Lord, there is a maxim afloat, a most false and destructive maxim. It has been proclaimed from the highest authority. It is the watchword of the present age. Some one among this great body, by the blessing of that God, and that Saviour, and that Spirit of all truth, whom it is our glory and our happiness to serve, ought soon to drag it out before the public, and lay it bare in its naked deformity. It is the old Sophistical doctrine that every man's opinion is true; couched under the imposing benevolence of a demand for the right of conscience. It laid Athens—England is Athens at present—low in the lowest depths of unutterable abominations and horrors. Suffer it to spread, and an angel from heaven cannot save us from a fate as awful.

This maxim places all religions alike upon a level. They are all equally true; and there is but one necessary consequence—that they are all equally false. This may be left to the consideration of the country. In the spirit of this principle, we are called on to frame a religious education which shall comprehend and be applicable to all sects of Christians, and all per-

suasions of men. Nothing but a belief in this principle can justify us one moment in the eye of reason for entertaining a thought of the proposal. We are, or profess to be, servants of God, who, by his own most solemn word, has declared its falsehood. We are the heirs and trustees of men who would as soon have trampled on their Saviour, as left their wealth to be profaned by such a madness. We are the great instructors of this nation—the great guardians of truth and religion for the whole heathen world. Woe be to us if we lend ourselves, even by submission, to such a wild and loathsome abomination. Woe to us if we do not enter against it our most solemn protest—give it in the face of the nation—before God himself—seal it by all such resistance as truth, and patriotism and piety can demand of their worshippers and servants. Let it enter into the minds of the young, by exhibiting it triumphant in our sanctuaries; and where shall we stop?

My Lord, I need not enter into other reasons, which are very practical, very unsurmountable; but which will not be required to rouse the feelings of the country, and especially the spirit of this place. Our discipline cannot be carried on, if a principle which defies all discipline is spontaneously admitted among us. We know what that discipline requires, what opposition exists to it in sectarianism, and how the infec-

tion will spread when we are brought into contact with the poison. But this is not all. Dissenters must be admitted to exceptions, which will act as privileges and bounties. No attendance at our daily devotions, for we would not compel them to be hypocrites, or hold up such an example to others. Our worship is not a thing of discipline—nor is it to be used as a roll call, or a punishment. It is intended as an act of religion. They must be excluded from attendance. Our lectures on Theology they must likewise omit. Many others among the dissipated and idle would long for the indulgence—would probably claim the privilege. They would plead the right of conscience, and we could not oppose it by reason. We could only oppose it by contriving some compensating labour or stigma, which would irritate and gall every hour. We should be compelled to inflict a penalty for religious opinions, or create some painful substitute for attention to religion and devotion. May God protect us from such a frightful necessity!

We shall not adopt, let it not be supposed, the alternative by which some have expected to remove the great difficulty on this head of discipline—the shutting up our chapels. When we can ourselves think it right to enter on the duties of the day without praying for a blessing from heaven, when we can bear to close our

eyes at night without committing our souls to our Saviour, when we despise his commands, when we distrust his promises, when we feel no happiness in prayer, no good from attempts to pray, when all the injunctions of piety, the recollections of gratitude, the memory of Prophets and Martyrs, the thought of our eternal communion with all holy and sainted spirits, the hope that even now we may be rearing fresh souls to swell their numbers, and the sense of a most true affection binding us all together, young and old, teacher and pupil, when we kneel down together, in prayer before the great Father and Instructor of us all—when all this has passed from our mind, and we can think a day spent happily and well, without any of these hopes and consolations, we shall embrace this most wicked evasion ; we shall abandon our prayers that we may indulge Dissent ; we shall give up our spiritual communion with our own Church, that we may purchase a worldly communion with those who detest it. Before that time arrives, I hope our walls will be a heap of ruins, and our bones mouldering beneath them.

We will not give up our daily worship. We cannot exempt any students from it without a privilege or a stigma. We do not intend to permit, in order that this worship may be supplied to them—to each in their own form—edifices to

multiply within us, where all heresies and impieties may be taught, from the superstitions of popery down to the last new philosophical dogma, which twenty resident householders,—Englishmen, Christian Englishmen, let us hide our heads!—may procure to be licensed by a magistrate, and which therefore the State may determine to call and to deal with as a religion. There is still an alternative. It has been suggested in the Legislature as possible. It has been tried at Cambridge. Insist on their attendance. Do not recognise their plea of conscience. Bring them together to prayers, to the prayers of the Church of England—make them kneel down side by side, Catholics and Socinians—put the same words into their mouths, those words which must be blasphemy to one, if they are not idolatry to the other. Let this be done in the face of those whom you would teach to approach their Maker with an honest and awful heart; and what must be the effect of such a spectacle of legalised hypocrisy and impiety on minds which reason from an atom to a whole mass of self indulgent conclusions. What has been the effect at Cambridge? Indeed, it is painful to avow. But every man engaged in this question has one paramount principle to guide him, Truth and his duty to religion. I shall, therefore, not hesitate to declare an opinion which is shared by all with whom I have

ever spoken on it, and formed after long observation and very deliberate enquiry, that something in the system of Cambridge,—which all reason would mainly fix upon its discipline as connected with Dissenters,—is wrong, is mischievous, is full of a tendency to irreligion. If no lectures are given on the strict peculiarities of Christianity, (our whole religion is a mass of peculiarities) and if the worship of God is thus profaned by the forced presence of those who claim the right and permission to loathe it, we cannot be surprised at the result. I say nothing, my Lord, concerning rumours,—I might add, avowals of very high talents coupled in young minds at Cambridge with professed infidelity. They may be totally false—it is hoped they are—but they are very common. I say nothing of the general impression on the minds of all those who are acquainted with the prevalent tone of opinion among the young in both our Universities. Let the Bishops be consulted on the difference between the candidates who appear before them for ordination. Let the existence at Cambridge of a strong religious party, drawing itself away from intercourse with the regular associations of the place,—let this be received as a sign, a sure and infallible sign, that some contrary spirit is around them. Let the course of theology laid down as the religious education of the students, be examined by those who un-

derstand the practical character of Christianity. Grammatical criticisms of the Bible, and Paley's Evidences, (I omit Paley's Moral Philosophy, which it is a stigma on any learned body not long since to have ejected and exposed,)—surely this cold, and meagre, and miserable pittance is not called instruction in the Gospel. And yet evidences, and grammar, and history, is all the Christianity we can give men, if these are the only points on which they will consent to agree. The technical evidences of the Bible, whenever they assume a foremost and paramount rank in Christian education, are out of their place. Men who are enjoying an estate, (it is the remark of the admirable Chalmers,) do not waste their time in poring over their title deeds. The enjoyment of Christianity to each of us is the great evidence of its truth. When our right to it is disputed, let us defend it. For this purpose young men should be acquainted with the grounds of their pride, that they may resist attacks. And at times they should be led to examine them in all their wonderful wisdom and construction, as men gaze on the prodigies of nature, to raise up their hearts in gratitude and love to the Being who has so provided for our wants. But to be always bringing out our parchments, and wrangling against flaws and impostures, is not a very profitable employment. And it indicates doubt in ourselves, as it ge-

nerates suspicion in others. This, my Lord, was probably one reason—a most wise and most admirable reason—why those who framed our studies, laid down the Articles of our faith as the basis of our religious instruction; that the privileges, the promises, the glories, and the duties of Christians might be placed constantly before the young, to feed, and nourish, and invigorate their souls, rather than to starve them upon sophistries and quibbles—and all the cold, heartless, subtleties of a formal and cavilling disputation. Let us pray God and our Saviour to guard us from abandoning this salutary wisdom.

At Cambridge, an opposite system has been necessarily suggested by the presence of Dissent; and I think it has done infinite mischief. That some mischief has long been working there is the opinion of many who have watched it. It is a common and strong opinion. Its absence would be the wonder. The last confirmation I received of it, was the decision of an eminent person, a friend of my own, educated at Cambridge, peculiarly connected with it, most sincerely attached to it, and anxious for most important reasons that his son should be educated there too. He was warned to examine. And he has sent his son to Oxford.

I have not shrunk from this painful task of censuring, as far as one individual has a right to express an opinion, a sister University,

abounding in such admirable men, and united to us now so closely in the ties of our common duty to the country. For its authority is all that can, with the slightest pretension, be advanced to support this new scheme of confusion. If the scheme has worked well there, it may be tried without danger here. I answer that, in my own honest open conviction, it has worked most ill—that it has done real mischief. It would indeed be most gratifying to find that all these presumptions are false. There is one happiness in making such charges, that no one can wish to see them refuted and exposed so earnestly as those from whom they proceed. And in this feeling they have now been made, not without anxiety certainly, not without thought. But the great question now before the country is the question of religious education. And no fear of offence or reproach, can justify the suppression of truth. But on this enough has been said. I will not, however, lay down my pen without once more solemnly protesting before God and this Christian country, protesting as a practical witness deeply and most anxiously interested in the welfare of a large body of students—as a man who will yield to hundreds in all other claims to attention, but who will not yield to one in his wish to devote himself wholly to his charge—without separately protesting now, as I am just about to protest with the whole body

of Instructors in this place, against a scheme which is to place that charge in contact with all the poison of scepticism and schism.

I proceed, my Lord, to the Church.

It may be necessary to remind the Legislature, what it long since appears to have forgotten, that the Clergy are not the Church, nor is the Church the Clergy. The Clergy are the officers of the Church. The Church, in this country, is the whole body of Christian citizens who agree in the form of doctrine, and subscribe to the religious constitution marked out in our Articles of Faith. Of this body the Clergy are by far the most important and prominent part. They are its organs of instruction. Corrupt them, lower their tone of mind, unsettle their faith—and the country must inevitably be unchristianized. With this it must become revolutionized. Revolution is the sister of Infidelity. They walk through the world hand in hand, as we may see by looking across the Channel. God has bound them together. But of the Clergy we are mainly the Instructors. Even if some separate system be hereafter arranged to complete their professional education, the first part of their life must be spent in great schools of learning, and taste, and literature, and science, that they may go out as champions of Truth armed with all its weapons and its graces. The Church depend upon the Clergy, the Clergy upon us. We

are neither one, nor the other. But the guardians and Instructors of both. Now, my Lord, what ought to be in conscience, in common prudence, in common honesty, the dealings of a legislative body with such a fearfully important institution? By whose advice should it be guided? Whose wishes and interests should it consult? Should it be the wishes of its avowed and conspiring enemies, or its own firm and unbiassed remonstrances? Will any minister have the heart to enforce his own plan of expediency against the urgent, and anxious, and solemn warnings of those who are most deeply involved in it?

Indeed your Lordship does not understand our feelings, or the feelings of the Church, if you think we are kept aloof from Dissenters by any jealous, narrow-minded addiction to prejudices and parties. They have seceded from us. They profess conscientiously to differ from us. Secession itself is such an evil, in the eyes of reason and of Scripture—it is—but nothing should be said that can possibly give offence. A great portion of Dissent in this country has perhaps grown up inevitably from the poverty of our Church endowments. The word should be repeated—our poverty. We know this; and a very sincere feeling of regret, of excuse, of anxiety to bring all true and good Christians

together, at least in some charitable comprehension of mutual kindness, is very, very strong among us. This can be the only source of rational and permanent conciliation—the only mode of building up the Church. Men are not reconciled by measures which force them violently into contact, the one party struggling and defeated, and the other overbearing in triumph. A body can not be strengthened by a compromise of its principles, or an abandonment of duty. Our numbers ought not to be swelled by a selfish and treacherous proselytism. The persons who would put themselves in our power to be thus won over to the Church, if they approve of our system, need not abstain from our communion; if they disapprove, cannot conscientiously place themselves in such peril of corruption. They are not worth having. No man is worth having as a member of a Christian society, who sacrifices his conscience or religion to his thirst for classical learning. Spare us, my Lord, from such support as can only be purchased by criminality, and when purchased can only corrupt us. It is indeed a very low and a very absurd attempt to barter our honesty for peace.—It is totally abhorrent from our faith, to indulge in any such speculation. Assuredly the very suggestion indicates a lamentable oversight of the pure and high

principles of the gospel. Kindness and peace, and conciliation, but no compromise—no confusion.

But, indeed, if we dared, in direct opposition to our Bibles, to fall away into any such thought, if we desire to sit down in indifference, or run away from the contest in cowardice, or hope for peace when there was no peace, the cry which is ringing in our ears would startle us into firmness and resistance. What is the prayer of the Dissenters?

They say to Oxford. Give us education. We want nothing beyond. They say to Cambridge. Education you give us already—more than this, you give us its honours—you send us out, as we profess to desire, sealed with your mark of approbation. We can be wranglers, and optimes, and medallists, and enjoy every other title which bears a value in the eyes of a student. But we want power, and you must grant us degrees. Indeed, my Lord, I can scarcely trust myself to speak on the intense, I had almost said, on such a question, the wicked ignorance, on all the real facts of the case, which has been exhibited in the House of Commons throughout these late discussions. Every member of either University knows that the academic degree is nothing in the eye of a student, except as it leads him to power in the government of the place, or entitles him to some similar privilege

chiefly in ecclesiastical institutions. Our ambition in Oxford is to be mentioned in the Class List, which precedes, and is totally distinguished in time, and nature, and the qualifications especially required by it, from the mere title of Bachelor of Arts. This honour obtained, degrees are forms, expensive forms, often deferred, in many cases wholly omitted. It must be the same in Cambridge. Let us hear no more of that very silly, but very mischievous, sentimentality, whining and weeping over the hardship of exhausting the honest industry of a student and then withholding the reward. His reward as a student is never withheld. And nothing is denied him but power, which he ought not to have as a Dissenter, and which, we are told, he professes not to covet. To concede the degrees at Cambridge, except as an instrument of power, or with restrictions on the exercise of authority, would be really an absurdity and mockery—which does provoke a smile even in the midst of such anxieties. They have all its other value at present. The House of Commons had much better pass a law to present them, in the face of the nation, with an empty egg-shell.

Indeed it seems that this is now understood. The whole grievance of which Dissenters complain might at once be removed, by applying to the Inns of Courts, and the College of Physicians, and asking them to accept a certificate

of residence and examination, as equivalent to an University degree. Whether they would consent or not, depends on the view they take of the test which they require. If it be a test of literary instruction, and gentlemanly associations, one would answer as well as the other. If it be a test of religion—of course they would be called on to maintain that ground themselves. But an application to them is the simple and obvious process. No one dreams of it. Why not? Simply that the removal of this grievance is not the object in view. It would not involve the principle which they now require to be conceded. God grant that the country may wake up, and rub its eyes, and see this new monster of politics standing unveiled before us. It is the principle that all property whatever, consecrated by the piety of individuals to special ecclesiastical purposes, or purposes of a peculiar religious education, may be plundered from its legal trustees, turned away from the intentions of the testator—no, not turned away—not turned away—but brought directly to oppose and counteract them, in order that all religions (how many there are to be they do not say) may share it, in proportion to their numbers.

My Lord, this principle is avowed, and Parliament is called on to sanction it—not openly, (the country would not bear it) but quietly and secretly, in this obscure, and, to the bulk of the

nation, unintelligible, uninteresting measure. This place is the field for contesting it. It is the Thermopylæ of consecrated endowments. And we intend to maintain it.

I will say nothing of our immediate patronage connected with the Church; or the direct interference with those statutes which regulate our religious education. These statutes sooner or later will be placed in the hands of Dissenters, if they once are admitted to degrees, as a religious foundation lately was discovered to be usurped by Unitarians. At present there is the bulwark of a national law. Remove that bulwark, and the course of events can be easily foreseen. A Dissenter will present himself for admission at a particular College. No College, perhaps, consistently with the spirit of its statutes, perhaps no Hall, can now receive him. Neither could the University admit him even in a private society. The University statutes themselves require its professors and officers to remove every schismatic from our body. They do so, on the principle embodied in a late public declaration from this place, lest the minds of the young should be unsettled, controversy generated, and scepticism introduced.

The plan is wise. The spirit of it thoroughly Christian. They command our celebration of the Sacrament. They require that all students should attend the religious service of the Church.

They especially exclude them from attendance upon any other form of worship ; and whatever be our office, they pledge us all to interest ourselves in their principles. They prescribe examinations in Divinity as a necessary condition to a degree. No one has yet explained how this is to be continued, if all sects of religion are to be examined. For the science of Divinity does not rest in a dry, legal system of evidences ; it is a whole body of facts and doctrines embodied in articles of our faith. We might as well call the parchments in a strong box the estate to which they give the title.

But these points need not be multiplied. Before a Dissenter could be admitted to our colleges, the statutes of our colleges must be repealed.

And before he can be admitted to the University he must be admitted to a College, and admitted as a member of the Church. Excluded from every College he will ask to be admitted to reside here as an independent student. It will not be permitted. We possess the internal regulations of our own body, and we shall not allow it. Our reasons are undeniable, and our purpose, I believe, firm. Indeed the statutes prohibit it expressly. But a College of Dissenters may be formed. Our reasons again are undeniable ; our purpose equally firm. Our statutes prohibit it expressly. What is to be done ? Alter those statutes ? What, my Lord ?

Do you suppose, can you really think so meanly of a body, as honest, as pious, and as resolute to do their duty as any to be found in this country, —do you dream for one moment that we shall permit, if one spark of good feeling remain in us, the House of Commons to meddle thus tyrannically with the especial prerogatives of the Crown? That we shall give up to any House of Commons the right of imposing on our consciences any mode, or any plan of education which is not based on the religion of our Church? Is this to be the liberty of conscience so proudly vaunted, and so promiscuously dispersed? Or is it hoped that we shall tamely surrender the sound system of our laws, which, old and wrinkled as they may seem, have all the vigour and virtue and wisdom of a venerable antiquity, to be cut open and disemboweled of their religion, that they may be stuffed with dry shavings of metaphysics, or to be hacked and hewed to pieces by the hands of no filial piety, without a hope of their issuing from the caldron, except in loathsome and parboiled mutilations. We have sworn to maintain them in their spirit. That oath was taken to the Church, sanctioned by a legislature representing the laity of that Church. It bound us to duties paramount to all civil and merely social obligations. How could we be justified in submitting without a strong and unanimous struggle to a power

which would release the obligation, while it professes itself an enemy to the body by which the obligation was imposed?

Indeed the Commons will have reason to rejoice, and the country be disappointed in their hopes, if any such submission can be exacted from such a body as the University of Oxford. If we do submit, we must trust that some merciful oblivion will blot out the page of history, in which the foul shame is recorded.

Undoubtedly the Sovereign Legislature has power to remodel any privileges which originally proceeded from itself. Undoubtedly it possesses the right of superintending endowments and corporate institutions; but a right to be as cautiously used, as it is absolute, ultimate, and dangerous. No one denies the power. And if the Monarch can no longer vindicate to himself the exercise of his special prerogative; it must fall into the hands of that body which succeeds in the usurpation of supremacy.

And the mandate of the House of Commons, may, if it once become supreme, compel us to give up our royal charter and public privileges to save the young men of this country from its unhallowed interference. But as we know the blessings of having some kind of Common Constitution, and as we know of no civil government, academical or national, which can exist without the sanction of religion, we shall give up to the

tyrannical power nothing but a name. The spirit and the body of our Statute laws, made, and sanctioned, and to be maintained by our own consent, and within our own body—all this will stand untouched. Nothing but an edict and a force to put down a body of Englishmen associated for the purpose of religious, and moral, and literary instruction, for bringing up the young men of this nation to fear their God and honour their king—nothing but an edict to do this can then touch us in any vital point. There is power among ourselves sufficient, if properly enforced, to exclude Dissenters from our private societies. And in them lies the danger.

Once force an entrance into any one of them, and the end is gained. The point is inserted, and the whole body of the wedge will soon follow. Give admission on any such principles as those at present professed, and with any such object as the gradual appropriation of revenues—for this is the end—it is openly avowed—no one pretends not to hear it—and not a stone will be left unturned till fellowships are conceded to the outcry.

I will not enter into all the melancholy steps by which the progress may rapidly be made from admission to education, up to admission into Government. Obloquy, clamour, thoughtlessness, prejudice, private partiality, mere worry and harass, ten thousand such forces

and feelings, must be encountered and resisted —for how long a time before some one point gives way, it matters little. It is not in human calculation that the struggle should last for ever. But I will not dwell upon a prospect, which by the mercy of God may be far removed, and which if the spirit continue, which is now animating the whole body of our governing Members, will only draw on with the great current of a general revolution. For by no art or measure of their own can the Legislature drive us from our purpose, unless we abandon it ourselves, or are forced from it in the tumult of insurrection, or the breaking up of the whole mass of this Kingdom. While property is sacred in its eyes, we cannot be touched. It matters little, it matters nothing at all, who were the founders of our Colleges, Catholics or Protestants. The property of every man is his own to dispose of it as he chooses and bequeaths, subject to the superintendence of the state in guarding it from nuisance and abuse. It is an inalienable right of our nature, an immutable principle of freedom. When it is denied in England, freedom will no more exist. And, therefore, I mean to assert that, Liberty and the endowments of our Colleges must perish together, perish in a bloody tyranny of fanatical, savage irreligion. For the whole spirit of our Collegiate Statutes is a spirit of religion. Many

of these great institutions were founded expressly for its support. All of them are bound to maintain it, and bound by the most solemn adjurations. But this is not all. They were founded for a definite religion ; for Christianity—for Christianity in a certain shape and fixed body of doctrines—and these doctrines, the doctrines of that body, hitherto recognized and established as the National Church of England. Founded before the Reformation, or after, matters nothing. Catholic or Protestant matters nothing. At the Reformation the whole body of the Church, Laity and Clergy, including the Sovereign authority, purged itself of certain abuses, restored itself to its ancient faith, proceeded in its usual course, and retained all the property bequeathed to it—because the whole mass of the nation agreeing in the work, there was no other body to interfere, no other right to clash—because in so doing they conformed to the real spirit and tenor of the bequest, which was made for the preservation of religion, not for the propagation of its abuses—because in all reasonable calculation of human motives, the Testators, if then living, would have acquiesced and promoted the purification of their faith—and because not the House of Commons, or the Ministry, but all the authority of the State, in the name and behalf of the nation, with the sanction of reason, and the light of learning,

and the testimony of Martyrs, consecrating this act by the most solemn devotion, establishing not a new, but an old, and the oldest Christianity in all the Churches, and strong Holds, and Institutions, and endowments of the kingdom, clearing away, indeed, the blots, which obscured their religion, but bringing out the religion itself in all its purity and brightness to be the Presiding Spirit, the Shechinah of their country—because this supreme authority, supreme by the according voice of all that gives certainty to Truth, could not permit the propagation of dangerous abuses, by continuing our consecrated endowments in the errors of their original foundation. The spirit of the bequest was maintained, and not only maintained, but invigorated. That only was cut off from its letter, which destroyed its efficacy, and corrupted religion, and endangered truth, and had enslaved the country. And when any such case re-appears in our annals let us pray the same course may be adopted. But I deny the faintest, the slightest parallel between such a solemn work, conceived in such a spirit, and addressed to such an end, and a tyrannical interference with our Institutions from a House of Commons, paralyzing and overbearing the other branches of the Legislature, forced on by the clamour of sects, and no sects, who are banded together on no principle,

but hatred to religion, or jealousy, or empty speculations—an interference compelling the abandonment of the first and main object of our societies, and torturing and enslaving our conscience, or expelling us from an inheritance and trust, because we cannot and will not consent to sacrifice the purity of our faith, to the absurdity and criminality of indifference. No, my Lord, let the Legislature of the country watch over and superintend our foundations, in the spirit of piety and justice. Save us from our own abuses. Correct us in our errors. Stimulate us in all honest reformation. If, my Lord, you can implant in us a heart, more anxiously, more solemnly, more religiously to devote ourselves to the care of our charge—if you can rouse us into greater exertion, give us a deeper insight into man's nature, and God's means of restoring it to himself—make us wiser and better, and more zealous to discharge the trust committed to our hands, and to show ourselves worthy of the bounties with which our ancestors and our Maker have blest us, in the name of all Truth and Holiness interfere. Pass an act to make us better. Send us down a force to compel us to our duty. Eject us if we waste our means, or pervert our opportunities of good. But let not the Legislature or the King obstruct us in our course of improve-

ment, throw us back upon coldness or impiety—violate the whole soul of our Statutes—abate our religion as a nuisance.

Let me state the facts clearly as they stand.

The University is a Royal Incorporation for the promotion of education and learning, but imbued in its whole constitution with the spirit of Definite Religion. The King may resume our Charter. We may perhaps (no one can tell to what extremities persecution may drive us) be compelled to lay it as his feet, if the Legislature dare to propose its desecration as a condition of retaining it.

We are then left to ourselves.

Our Colleges are Trustees under Statutes, of which the whole spirit again binds them down to the maintenance of that Christian faith, to which they are at present devoted. Till that faith is a nuisance to the country, those Statutes cannot be abolished. Till those who administer abuse them, they cannot be removed from their trust.

May we not assert, my Lord, that with any invasion of our establishments, true religion will be abandoned by the Legislature—and a true tyranny introduced into the country?

For a tyranny is not a monarchy. In the language most thoroughly stamped with the political experience of men, it is the synonym for a popular assembly, for a House of Com-

mons, uncontrolled by any other force in the State. The whole country perceives that we are verging to this condition of democratical despotism. One after another, power by power, openly or secretly, that House is drawing within itself the whole weight and authority of the Legislature. The great stride is to be made now. Claim a right over all ancient endowments, not to restore them to their purpose, or clear them from abuses, but to interfere with their discipline and statutes, and turn their wealth to any purpose you may choose—and the whole body of property in trust for any object whatsoever, religious or charitable, civil or literary, a hospital or a college, falls at once into its grasp. The great institutions of the country are laid prostrate at its feet. Democracy is established and enthroned on all the great foundations of society. Its treasury is replenished, its principles propagated, its reign triumphant. Thank God that we have not the delusion of a religious democracy to contend with. Thank God the democracy of this day is a democracy of impiety—all sects confounded ; all faith to be shaken ; all landmarks of truth removed ; all principles of conscience abandoned, in the very outcry for rights of conscience ; the desecration of the State openly avowed ; the pillage of Churches and of Ministers studiously and resolutely exhorted to ; men whose very souls, if Christian,

would shudder at such a communion, joining hand in hand, and profaning by their impious associations, the very House of the Saviour they blaspheme ;—Thank God this spectacle is laid bare, before the hour intended, and by a madness which we could scarcely expect, that it may warn, and perhaps may save us.—It will have its effect upon the people. Once before we have passed the ordeal of a revolution; but it was a religious revolution. Nothing of the kind is now to be expected. We must not confound times and seasons. This epoch in society is much farther advanced, and the crisis of much greater peril. It would be better, infinitely better, to resign at once all the endowments of religion into the hands of catholics or presbyterians, give any one sect a predominance, and let the protestant Church of England sink down into a tolerated dissension, than retain by a trembling thread the position we now hold, and purchase the mockery of a peace by breaking up all the barriers of religion. It would be safer for our country, safer for Christianity. In concession to indiscriminate demands there is nothing but universal destruction.

Such, my Lord, is the case of the University of Oxford.

We do not stand before the public to apologize for a worn out franchise, to defend a monopoly of trade, or to plead for a property in slaves.

In this rage for breaking up establishments, and reducing all society to its atoms, we have been very artfully confounded with bodies of a very different kind, whose rights were more questionable, and their defence less intelligible to a heated and fanaticised people. But the poorest peasant in the country can understand the interest we have in preserving a sound system of religious education. The hand which shall be raised against us will be raised against the young men of England, against their parents, against their faith, against their God. I do not covet the nerves of that man, who is placed here to watch over, and guide them when first thrown into the temptations of the world, and does not sit down, bowed double with anxiety, to think what he shall do in this crisis. I do not envy that heart which can have been thrown into associations with our students, seen them when in their vacant and busy hours, watched them in the ebullition of their feelings, dealt with them even, at times, in the necessary harshnesses of discipline, and learnt how much good is contained in their young and honest natures, without swearing in the presence of his Maker, never, till the very last gasp, to abandon this treasure-house of England, to be polluted by an unholy rapacity. I hope, I do honestly believe, that this spirit will fill us all. We are unanimous—let us thank

God for it, and pray him to direct us in the contest. Nothing low, nothing sordid, nothing violent—above all, nothing of political hostility, or rancour to those who are attacking us, must enter into our hearts. Thus far we have been national Universities—national, not in any benefits which we have derived from the nation, but in the manifold blessings and honours which the nation has derived from us.

We must,—it will cost us as Englishmen, as men, as gifted with the prophecy of history, and foreknowledge of all the ghastly shapes which rise up from the grave of religion, when a people, whom God has blest, conspire upon its murder—we must—abandon the title of National and substitute that of Christian. Not that there is no Christianity beyond the pale of our communion.—God forbid. God forbid that there should not be thousands upon thousands who refuse to join in our prayers upon earth, but whom God in his mercy may bring to unite their thanksgivings in Heaven. But the spirit of this attack is unchristian. Its watchword is unchristian. Its end is unchristian. If it triumph, no faith in the country will be able to stand against the current of a vague, insidious, latitudinarian, theorizing philosophy, gradually washing away all landmarks and distinctions, undermining all solid foundations of truth and practice, spreading out into a shallow, stagnant marsh of treacherous

quicksand and noxious exhalations, making the whole nation Unitarians.

It is the principle, as much as the practice, contained in this hateful measure, that we must prepare to expose and to resist.

And that resistance, my Lord, to the very utmost of their power, by every means in their power, to the very last moment, contemplating all that may come, and prepared for it all, there are who have promised upon their knees. We are the creatures of God. We are members of the body of Christ. And we have a Spirit within our hearts to guide and preserve us in the conflict. We are not worthy of the name of Christians, if we do not rise up to a man and defend our faith and our country.

But a very few years can pass, and we shall all be lying in our graves. And not many years more, and we shall wake up to be judged. God grant that at that day we may not be found side by side with the authors and promoters of this evil—their excuse jealousy, or ungodliness—and ours, indolence or fear.

I have the honour to be,

MY LORD,

Your humble and obedient Servant,

W. SEWELL.

Exeter College.

POSTSCRIPT.

The Bill itself has just been sent down; and I hasten, not to express—no language is sufficiently strong—to say something of the feeling with which it is received among us. Never in the constitutional annals of our history did any man contrive to amass, in one sheet of paper, so much ignorance, so much presumption, so much mockery of all that is sacred, so much insult to the feelings of a body, not yet despised in this country, and such a tyrannical annihilation of the rights and liberties of Englishmen.

Its preamble, that academical education is expedient for all classes, we do not deny—but that all classes should be educated in one academy, we do deny. We say that it is most inexpedient, most mischievous, most unchristian. Our authority is somewhat higher than the opinion of Col. Williams, or Mr. Wood.*

It proceeds then with the most solemn mockery to enact an oath to be taken by

* Colonel Williams, the Author of the Bill, was obliged to pause in his speech, and apologize for his imperfect explanation, by his previous unacquaintance with the subject. Mr. Wood is said to be an Unitarian; I sincerely apologize to him, if the report is false.

Roman Catholics, as if Roman Catholics were the persons whom the Church of England had to resist, and not Unitarians, by whom this persecution is organised. It is an oath of abstaining from any exercise of power to the detriment of the Established Religion. By whom is it imposed? By the assistance of a body of Roman Catholics, who have taken the same oath, and are now sanctioning and enforcing this attack upon the very citadel of the Church. It is really too much to accustom us to all this horrible profanation. Let the word oath be expunged from our dictionaries, that if possible we may forget as Englishmen the infamy with which it is connected.

But the Bill proceeds—

IT FIRST ABROGATES, VIRTUALLY, THE WHOLE BODY OF OUR UNIVERSITY STATUTES.

IT THEN ANNULS THE POWER OF INTERNAL GOVERNMENT IN ALL VITAL ESSENTIAL POINTS.

IT THEN ANNIHILATES THE WHOLE MASS OF COLLEGIATE STATUTES WITH ALL THEIR DISTINCTIVE PROVISIONS FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF THE WILL OF THE FOUNDERS.

IT THEN DEMANDS OF US A MOST HORRIBLE VIOLATION OF THE MOST SOLEMN AND REPEATED OATHS, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE.

And it concludes with an absurdity so gross that even in the present state of legislation, it does surprise. Nothing in our Statutes is to interfere with the enactments of this Bill. But nothing in this Bill is to interfere with the enactments of our Statutes. That is—our Statutes by letter and spirit exclude the possibility of admitting Dissenters, or retaining them if admitted. The Bill declares that they shall be admitted—but the Statutes and the Bill are not to interfere with each other.

With this monstrous provision, which would be too ludicrous to expose, if it were not for the atrocity of its tyranny, the Bill concludes!

If it passes, the next thing for the House of Commons will be to reverse the decision of the Law on the case of Lady Hewley's Charity, and put the University and our Colleges at once into the hands of Unitarians.

There are indeed still Laws in our country, and British Judges to administer them.

But God knows what must be the consequence of putting all the most sacred principles of equity and of society within the reach of men, who can thus dare to meddle with, and pull

them to pieces, as if legislation was a game, and legislators a mere parcel of ignorant mischievous schoolboys.

“ The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge supply ample opportunities for the education of the Clergy of the Established Church. It is manifestly impossible to provide a course of professional education for the ministers of religion of those congregations who do not belong to the Established Church. It is equally impossible to institute theological lectures for the instruction of lay students of different religious persuasions, which would not be liable to grave objections ; still less is it practicable to introduce any religious observances that would be generally complied with. In the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, the students removed from the superintendence of their parents and guardians, are placed in colleges, or new domestic establishments, where it is necessary that religious instruction should be provided.”—*Preface to the London University Calendar.*

Such is the testimony of one most urgent for the present measure. This preface is attributed to Lord Brougham. Let me remark here, that his Lordship has wholly misrepresented the opposition of the University of Oxford to the London College. It was our duty as Christians

to remonstrate against the establishment by the King, who is head of our Church, of an irreligious system of education. As members of the Church, it was our duty to protest against any gratuitous indulgence which weakened the expression of peculiar attachment from the Legislature to that Church. As Members of this University, we had a right to remonstrate against a confusion of titles, not only painful to ourselves, but dangerous to established institutions. But let an University be founded, in which religion is rightly maintained, and learning duly promoted, and, I am sure, no body of men will be so anxious to encourage it as the University of Oxford. This end can only be gained by giving to each sect a charter, and different titles to each. This is, indeed, an evil principle—but it is the least noxious, and the most easy.

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